

I claim,

1. A database of photographs or pictures for a stock photography agency or the like comprising:

a plurality of digitized images; and

a table of associations between images to facilitate accessing said images,

wherein said associations are assigned as a result of selections of said images by users of said database during searches for goal images within said database.

2. The database of claim 1 wherein said table represents non-verbal associations.

3. The database of claim 1 wherein said associations are non-verbal links between images.

4. The database of claim 1 wherein said table represents image pairs.

5. The database of claim 4 wherein said table further contains a weight for each image pair.

6. The database of claim 5 wherein said weight is a concurrence value.

7. A method for searching in a database of images comprising the steps of:

selecting at least one launch image that is related to a goal image;

using said launch image for accessing a table in said database that contains non-verbal associations between images of said database; and

displaying an image from said database that shares a non-verbal association with said launch image;

wherein said associations are recorded in said table based upon paired selections made by image seekers who previously used said database.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said non-verbal associations relate image pairs.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein said step of displaying an image is based upon an analysis of a concurrence value stored in said table that is related to the shared non-verbal association between the displayed image and said launch image.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said concurrence value is calculated from image selections made by image seekers who previously used said database.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said analysis is a comparison between said concurrence value and a threshold value.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said step of displaying an image is based upon an analysis of a matching threshold for a group of launch images.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein said comparison determines whether the concurrence value equals or exceeds the threshold value.

14. A computerized apparatus for locating an image from a collection of images comprising:

a computer; and

a database having digitized images and a table containing numerical associations between said images;

wherein said computer:

(a) prompts for the input of launch data pertaining to said goal image, and

(b) locates a related image where said related image shares a numerical association with said launch data in said table.

15. The computerized apparatus of claim 14 wherein said numerical associations between images are relations between image pairs.

16. The computerized apparatus of claim 14 wherein said computer records numerical associations between images of said database in said table where said numerical associations are based upon inputs provided during a search of said database that indicates interest in said images.

17. The computerized apparatus of claim 14 wherein said computer records keyword-to-image associations where said keyword-to-image associations are based upon inputs provided during a search of said database that indicates interest in said images.

18. The computerized apparatus of claim 14 wherein said launch data represents an image.

19. The computerized apparatus of claim 14 wherein said launch data represents a group of images.

20. The computerized apparatus of claim 19 wherein said computer's step of locating a related image is contingent upon a matching threshold and said numerical associations of said table.

21. The computerized apparatus of claim 14 wherein said computer's step of locating a related image is contingent upon said numerical association satisfying a threshold value.

22. The computerized system of claim 21 wherein said numerical association comprises a concurrence value.

23. A computer readable medium with executable instructions for controlling the search of a database of images, said instructions controlling:

recording of non-verbal associations between images of said database in a searchable data structure;

prompting for input of launch data;

locating said launch data in said data structure; and

accessing at least one image in said database where said image shares a non-verbal association in said data structure with said launch data.

24. The computer readable medium of claim 23 wherein said non-verbal associations between images are pairs of images.

25. The computer readable medium of claim 24 wherein said data structure is a table.

26. The computer readable medium of claim 23 wherein said launch data represents an image from said database.

27. The computer readable medium of claim 23 wherein said launch data represents a keyword.

28. The computer readable medium of claim 23 wherein said instructions further control the recording of a weight for each non-verbal association between images of said database.

29. The computer readable medium of claim 28 wherein the instructions for accessing an associated image using said data structure are contingent upon the value of said weight.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein said weight is a concurrence value.

31. A computerized system for searching within a collection of images comprising:

a database relating digitized images;

a computer server coupled to said database; and

a network connection device coupling said computer server to a network;

wherein said database comprises a searchable data structure of non-verbal associations between said images; and

wherein said server communicates with a client on said network to:

(a) receive launch data from said client representing a launch image;

(b) access said database using said launch data; and

(c) transmit a related image to said client that shares a non-verbal association with said launch data in said data structure.

32. The computerized system of claim 31 wherein said non-verbal associations are assigned to said data structure as a result of interest indicated in previous searches by image seekers using said database.

33. The computerized system of claim 31 wherein said server records non-verbal associations between image pairs in said data structure where said non-verbal associations are based upon one or more messages from said client that indicate an interest in said images.

34. The computerized system of claim 31 wherein said server records, in said data structure, non-verbal associations between keywords and images where said non-verbal associations are based upon one or more messages from said client that indicate an interest in said images.

35. The computerized system of claim 34 wherein said launch data represents a keyword and said data structure contains a table of keyword and image pairs.

36. The computerized system of claim 31 wherein said launch data represents a group of images.

37. The computerized system of claim 31 wherein said data structure of said database includes a weight for each said non-verbal association.

38. The computerized system of claim 37 wherein said server's transmission of a related image is contingent upon a comparison between (1) said weight of the shared non-verbal association between said launch data and said related image, and (2) a threshold value.

39. The computerized system of claim 38 wherein said weight is a concurrence value.

40. A method for locating a goal image from a collection of images comprising the steps of:

recording non-verbal associations between images from said collection of images based upon perceived characteristics of said images;

selecting a launch element pertaining to said goal image; and

suggesting a related image where said related image shares a non-verbal association with said launch element.

41. A method for locating a goal image from a collection of images comprising the steps of:

recording associations and concurrence values between pairs of images from said collection of images based upon perceived characteristics shared by the images of each pair of images, said perceived characteristics being identified by image seekers during attempts to locate goal images;

selecting a launch image pertaining to one of said goal images; and

suggesting a related image where said related image shares a non-verbal association with said launch image and said related image satisfies a function of said concurrence value.